PACKER JIM'S GUARDIANSHIP

By ROY NORTON

WHEN a man associates with burros for eight or ten years he gets the burro habit, and, like drinking or smoking, so they say, it's hard to break off. It was pretty well fixed on Jim Tipton when first he came to the Sierra Madres along with Baldy and three or four other pack-mules; but Baldy was his intimate friend, and the others didn't count.

It was when Holcomb Valley, away up in the tops of the hills, was a real camp, where every one was busy getting gold, or sure he was going to get it, and it was nobody's business who anybody else was or where he came from. Curiosity starts lots of cemeteries, so it didn't pay to want to know too much. All that any one ever really cared about was whether the other fellow was on the square, and Jim Tipton was all of that, So was Baldy. When Jim gave his word it was a certainty, whether he was only to bring in a sack of flour or take a mule-load of gold out, it would be done on time. And there isn't much of anything finer than always keeping your word and making good.

Jim had been a civilian teamster and packer with the army when things were lively along the desert, at a time in which a man didn't make any heavy bets, when he rolled in his blankets, that he would get up in the morning with his scalp. When the noble red man, as a reward for having tortured and murdered all he could, was finally pensioned into fat and lazy peace, Jim naturally drifted into packing, and the drifting and the packing brought him to Holcomb.

That's all any one knew of him, and more than anybody cared. But before long every one was glad he was there because packing wasn't a thing that most men tackled, particularly when the trail ran away off into the high-back hills, through passes, along shelves by waterfalls, and over places where the ledge tried to lose itself in the face of the cliffs. It was no pygmy's job.

Even for a packer, Jim wasn't handsome, being that kind of a man that the desert makes, or makes the desert—tall, lean, and leathery, sunburned to a red, and with little wrinkles around his eyes from much peering over hot sands. He was more liberal with everything than talk, of which he was miserly, perhaps through lack of practise. But the Lord Almighty's too busy to measure men by words. It's what they do. Be sure of that! So most men believe Jim stood pretty well with him, and others don't matter.

Baldy was a wise old chap, who had lived with Jim a long time. In fact, they must have become acquainted somewhere out on the desert before they came to the new camp. Baldy was rather a benevolent-looking burro, having a white face and whiskers and a pair of philanthropic ears much bigger around than any of his trim little legs, which a hand could girdle. He seemed to think he had a right to go into any cabin where Jim was welcomed, and, come to think of it, most everybody else thought so. He was just like a good-natured dog that's always hanging around a table or a camp-fire and looking so longingly for a little attention or a scrap of something to eat that no one can refuse out of mere politeness. Baldy was real polite, too, because he never took anything without asking for it in his way. Jim said Baldy got his honesty from a preacher who raised him, but the boys thought it was really from associating with Jim himself.

Life with them was just about the same one day as another. Break camp in the morning, swing the pack-trees on, get the loads up and throw the hitches and plod away over the trail, Baldy's bell calling "Tink-tank; tink-tank" as he led the way. Soft spots in the trail would stop the ringing until Jim came front and fixed it up. It was the same way with a bridge. Baldy would go up on it and tap it with his feet before putting his weight down until he got clear across, while the whole train would watch him go over, feeling sure of his judgment. And so every day they did the same, life beginning and ending with the trail. Always the trail.

Along about the time when the camp had settled into an every-day basis and was used to Jim and Baldy, Bill Pape came into the valley with his little girl. He wasn't strong enough to work in the hills, so made one of the first land entries in that country. It was almost the last thing any one else would have thought of, but the place was pretty enough, being a little valley through which a stream rambled along until it came to an edge where it fell off into a canon and made its bed out to the sage-brush flats, many miles below. Bill built him a cabin from the big logs around the valley's edge, and went into a sort of farming business, selling vegetables to the miners over at Holcomb for camp prices. He never got very well acquainted because he didn't seem to fit the West, but he wasn't a bad fellow. He was a dreamy kind of man, with book-learning. Used to read poetry and such.

Bill's place was the homiest anywhere around, and some way it appealed to Jim, who got into the habit of dropping over to the cabin with Baldy, whenever he got time, and watching Bill and his little Annie puttering around the flower-beds and truck patches. It seemed almost as if Jim and Baldy had been wanting a little girl to love for a mighty long time by the way they took up with Annie. Both of them used to pack her around on their backs, and several times Jim took her on the round trip to San Bernardino. And those were great trips!

Then came the time when she made all the trips with Jim and Baldy. It was when Bill died, leaving no relatives to whom he could send Annie. Jim brought the news.

There was a big time on at the dance-hall that night. More people there than usual. The lamps were swinging, and the fiddles going and the bar glasses clinking, when something came into the door that made everybody stop and take notice.

It was Jim Tipton, and in his arms he held a little girl who was crying and staring wide-eyed through her tears at the strangeness of a place she had never seen before.

Jim, standing there in the doorway with the black night behind him, put out one hand with a gesture that was part appeal and part command, and everybody listened. He waited until it was so still that you could almost hear the lights flicker.

"Boys," he said, in his slow voice, "Old Bill Pape's dead. Died about an hour ago, over in his cabin. I want somebody to help me take care of the girl tonight, and of him."

Now, death wasn't anything unusual in that sixty-foot log dance-hall. Men had died in it, and suddenly; but there was something about Bill Pape's dying, and something about that forlorn, sobbing baby girl that made every one feel a little queer. Most all the men volunteered to help, and all the women wanted to care for Annie. Probably they weren't the kind most men would want to take care of their children, but, after all, they might do worse. There's mighty few women bad enough so there isn't something fine in them when it comes to a helpless little girl.

They put Bill Pape away next day, the best they knew how. There was no preacher in the camp, so it was hard work to have a real ceremony, but a fellow who had served in the Mexican war played a tune on a bugle. Jim seemed to think Bill was the kind of fellow who didn't need any prayers.

From the very first Jim wouldn't allow any one to have any hand in the care of Annie, and it was a trifle awkward at times. There wasn't even a "Chink" laundryman in the camp in those days, every man being his own washerwoman. Jim had always got along the way every one else did. Used to tie a rope around his clothes and anchor them in the creek where the swish and whirl of the waters did all the work. Did it well, too, although it was a trifle hard on things. That's why everybody around the camp looked kind of bleached out, as if everything they had was from some place where colors weren't very strong.

When Jim fell heir to Annie, he took to snooping around the laundry end of some of the cabins, and it didn't leak out for quite a while that he had taken lessons in ironing, and brought flatirons up to his cabin from San Bernardino. The pains he used to take with Annie's sunbonnets and pinafores were probably more than he had ever taken with anything else in all his life. Got so he was as proud of his starching and ironing as a woman could be.

Some of the boys discovered him one day, and with his white hat at an angle on the back of his head, his blue shirtsleeves rolled up to the elbows, and laboriously ironing away on a lot of tucking. Jim was strong on tucks and frills for Annie. It got around the camp, and one day somebody who didn't know him very well undertook to get funny about it. It took the big packer in a place where it evidently hurt. He declared himself.

"Seems to strike some of you sheep-herders as funny," he said, "the way I take care of Annie. Maybe it's because you don't like the way the work's done, and maybe it's jest because you can't mind your own lay-outs. Well, I'm here to remark that the next feller that butts his nose into me and Annie's business is goin' to git hurt. I'll interfere with his features!"

Then he walked away; but after that he took more care with his laundry work than ever, and folks got used to it. Nobody ever said anything more, because, as one of the boys remarked: "Jim had a flat-iron instead of a chip on his shoulder," and wasn't a safe man to have fun with.

Annie regularly joined the pack-train for the summer season. Men on the trail would hear the "Tink-tank" of a bell, and then around a sharp curve, maybe, would come a solemn-looking old burro, more careful now than ever to find sure footing, and on his back would be a very little girl in a very big sunbonnet, sometimes weaving wild-flower chains, or, again, singing little baby songs. Sometimes, too, Baldy came trudging along without her. That was when she could be found asleep in the arms of the big lank man, who soberly rode in the rear.

"You see," he used to explain with great gravity as though he knew more about babies than Mrs. Winslow, "she's jest like cubs, and kittens, and all them other cute little cusses. She jest naterally has to go to sleep about onct every so often, so's to get big and strong and purty."

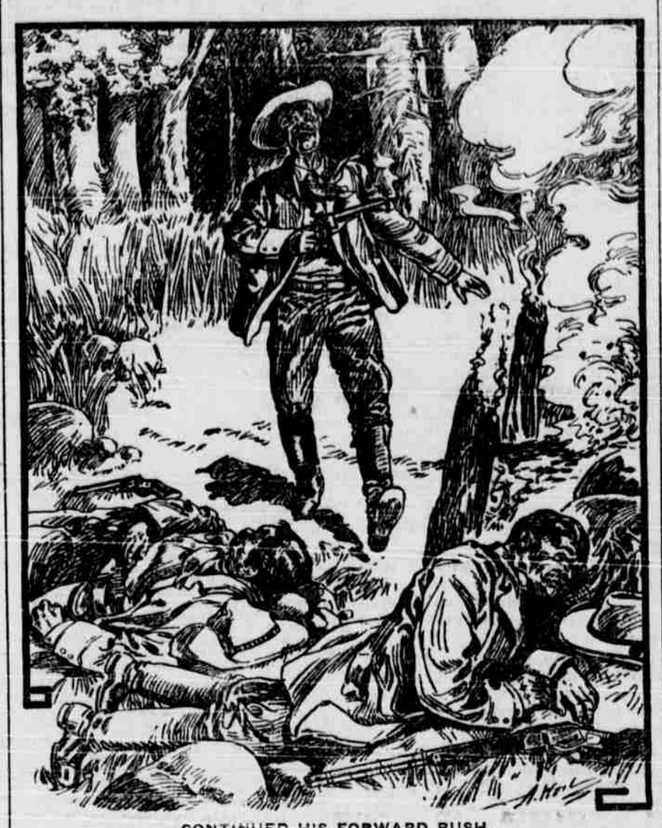
Then he would ride on and catch up with Baldy, who would look back once in a while as if to make sure whether he could really trust the girl with Jim.

Again, you might come on them by their camp-fire at night, when the flames were shooting up and making the shadows of the trees look very deep and dark, and on a log would be sitting Jim telling stories to little Annie, whose eyes would be very open and very interested. If you looked hard you would probably find Baldy loafing around somewhere pretty close by.

They called the place where Bill Pape died "home," and although they kept the flowers and things looking near and nice, the vegetables didn't get much care. Jim was too busy. Besides, Jim didn't seem to be much of a vegetable man.

"We've got to take care of this here place, Annie girl," he used to say, "because it's all you've got, and I promised your dad I'd look out for you."

Baldy gave a lot of trouble at first in his blundering way. He wasn't used to flower-beds and truck patches,



CONTINUED HIS FORWARD RUSH.

and thought that being a partner entitled him to eat most anything that was green around the place. Jim threatened to sell him, though, and maybe that was one reason he grew more careful. It was a very serious time.

"Baldy," Jim said, "you onery, no-account cuss, you've gone and eat the heads off four cabbages and five patches of marigolds, and now you've tried to swaller the rose-bush. I orter let you go to some feller bound for the desert where there ain't nothin' to eat; but I'm goin' to give you one more chance, and a dam good club-bin'."

So Baldy finally learned what not to eat.

Fall came along, and then there were occasional drifts of snow up in the high hills, and Jim was perplexed what to do with Annie. He didn't like the women of the camp, and he hated to have the girl away from him. So when he was down in San Bernardino, he took the advice of his warmest friend, "Jedge Gregg," and put her at school in the convent. It was a bitter parting and hard for her to understand. Jim talked to her as if she were almost a grown woman, instead of a five-year-old baby.

"Now, don't you feel bad, Annie girl," he consoled, as he patted her on the back. "I jest can't keep you with me, and I have to keep workin'. Besides, if I ain't lookin' out all the time and makin' a bluff at livin' on the place your daddy left you, somebody'll come along and jump your claim. There! There! Don't cry! I'll come and see you every trip, and"—his voice sank to a confidential whisper—"when summer comes again, and the brook is a-runnin' and the birds a-singin', you can hit the trail with me and Baldy, just like you've been doin'."

He walked around the room with her a few times, while the good sister waited and concluded: "And you must learn to read, so's when you git back you can read to me, because I ain't strong on readin'."

With this final solace, he left her, and in time she grew to watch for his comings, and bear with his goings.

The winter came, when the snows fell deep, to be followed by the time when the milder air told of spring, and the land showed green again. Everything in the camp was the same, but in the city, in the valley far below, there was great excitement and stir. Capitalists had come who were going to build a big dam across the canon below Jim's house, send their ditches over the valley below, and make the land worth something. Of course these men figured that Jim wouldn't give any trouble, and, if he did, it wouldn't amount to anything. He went ahead oblivious of all this until, on one of his trips, when he was coming away from the convent, a stranger stopped him in the street.

"You are Mr. James Tipton?"

"Yes."

"Well, I want to talk to you about that land you're squatting on up in the mountains. You'll have to get off."

Jim looked at the man in a daze, then woke up.

"Have to get off, eh? Squattin' on it, am I? That land belongs to my little Annie, and I'm her guardeen, after a fashion. She's goin' to keep it unless she gets a mighty good price for it."

"Oh, no, she isn't," came the sneering rejoiner. "We've staked it legally, and you'll have to get off or be put off."

The man might have said more, but something checked his speech. It was Jim Tipton's two hands clenched round his throat and shaking him as if to jerk his head off.

"You keep off Annie's ground," Jim said between his teeth and with his head thrust out until his eyes were on a level with those of the other man. "And I'll tell you right now, stranger, I'll kill any man that comes on, and don't care if you happen to be the first one."

Then he let go his hold and left the man sitting in the street with a crowd around.

"They sure can't grab Annie's land," he muttered, "but it looks as if they're goin' to give me trouble, and I don't know nothin' much about them things." So he decided to see his friend, the judge.

"Jim," the judge said, "I'll look the case up. I think your title is good; but in the meantime don't forget that possession means much. Possession may mean everything."

Jim said he would remember, and it was the first time since he came into the country that he went back light and driving his animals to the utmost, without filling his orders. He struck out for the pass in the hills at top-most speed, and drove his burros on long after the moon had risen. Their time of rest was short, and the dawn found them hurrying on again.

Throughout the day they went on, and on, and as he went Jim kept thinking and worrying over the turn that might go against Annie and her property. He believed he would be ahead of any others on the land, unless they had already been sent, and had waited for him to start the down-trip when they could put up their notices. He felt the need of reaching, in the very shortest time, the little cabin in the mountain's hollow, and when darkness fell once more there was small rest.

Another day of haste, and when night came he was close to his destination.

The little cavalcade swung over the brow of a hill and around a curve in the moonlight, which was strong, and came to a stop. They had been jumped and evicted in earnest, for below where the cabin had stood was now a heap of dying embers, and, lolling about a camp-fire but a short distance away, were four men in full possession.

Jim dropped from his saddle and stood for a moment as if planning his campaign. He knew that he must get to pretty close quarters before making his presence known. He started out into the open, and Baldy, tired but faithful, would have followed if Jim hadn't driven him back.

"Better keep out of trouble when you can, old man," he muttered. "I've got a little errand out there, so you stick here and grab grass while I go over and give a few kind words to them fellers that's had a bonfire and have hopped Annie's ground."

The heavier grass which ran along the outer rim of the valley wriggled mysteriously for several minutes and the crickets stopped their creaky songs as he crawled along to get as far forward as possible. He would surprise them if he could get close enough, and if he couldn't—well, then it was up to the best side to make good.

He crept onward to where the grass was too short for concealment, and at the edge of a bare spot rested for a few minutes, with every nerve strung to a pitch.

It's strange how, when men know they are doing wrong, they get as alert as wild animals. Jim had hardly climbed to his feet and started warily toward them, when one of the men sighted him and swung a gun into view, shouting, as he did so: "Stop, or I'll shoot!"

Jim, seeing that further caution was useless, went ahead. If he had believed there was a chance of his getting closer he was mistaken. There was a crash, and all four men opened fire on him at once, without waiting to see whether his errand was peaceable or not. He had served too many years on the frontier to take chances, and their shots went above his head, because he had suddenly dropped flat upon the ground. Without hesitation, he fired back, and the one who had begun the battle pitched forward, and was out of the fight.

The others started to get away from the light of the fire which made them too good a target, but before they could do so Jim fired again. A second man staggered back, his gun falling from his hands, and did a wabbling turn, while Jim watched.

"I'd give it to you again," Jim thought, "but I'm a little shy on cartridges, and will take a chance on that one being enough."

The man staggered for a moment, then dropped to the ground, where he rolled over and over, but without offering further fight. Jim saw his fall, and then sprang up and forward, on the run. The boiling in his blood caused by that first sight of the burned cabin had long ago given way to a cooler mood, but it was none the less deadly. He knew the chances he was taking in running forward, and resorted to the border trick of "buck-jumping" from side to side as he ran, rendering the aim of the enemy less certain.

One of the men stood his ground, and fired repeatedly. Jim felt a quick, searing shock that was followed by an instant's giddiness, but continued his forward rush. His opponent was apparently out of ammunition, and frantically snapped his hammer on empty shells. It was this alone that saved his life. Jim dropped his gun into aim, and his finger was convulsively tightening on the trigger, when he heard the harmless clicking, and lowered the weapon.

"Drop that gun and put your hands up," he shouted, "and tell your pardner to come alongside with his hands up. Quick! or I'll get you and tend to him later."

The jumper had sense enough to recognize that this was his only hope, and did as ordered. The other man, who had been in the background hurriedly reloading his pistol, came slowly forward with his hands in the air, and stopped beside his accomplice. No one spoke for an instant, and the whole scene was like a picture; two men standing there in the light of the night with their hands above their heads, while in front of them, with the glow bringing out the grimness of his face and the steady, cold glare of his eyes, was a man who leaned slightly forward with a poised pistol ready for instant action.

As if to add to the seriousness of it all, at one side rested a tragically still shape, and on the ground between them was seated another man who wove to and fro as if unconscious of the others, and half-delirious from a wound in his breast which he clutched with both hands.

"Who hired you to jump my Annie's claim?" Jim asked of the man who had stood his ground, and now there was no drawl in his voice, but a sharp incisiveness.

The jumper hesitated, and didn't appear to want to answer. The packer's gun came suddenly into quick line with the man's head, and nothing but a brisk confession saved him. After that he was ready to talk. He realized that the one before him was in no mood to stop at anything, least of all his death. He read something in the grim, set face that sent a shuddering question through his mind as to whether even the answering of all question would bring mercy. It seemed that at that moment now it might become an execution. Two examples of resistance were at his feet.

There was another instant's silence, in which time the man who had been rocking backward and forward on the ground gave another twist, sagged gently over on his side, and then stretched out his length, quiet and motionless. The man whose hands were in the air watched this convulsive movement with intent interest, but Jim's gaze never wavered from them. He had no pity for the others.

"I reckon you fellers were told to burn my Annie's cabin and to kill me if you could find an excuse, weren't you?"

"Yes," came the sullen answer, and Jim again seemed to be studying over something. Lights were dancing before his eyes, a kind of numbness was stealing over his heart, and it was hard work to keep from weaving about even as that man at his feet had done. He shut his teeth together hard in his determination to control himself and keep these two men before him from the knowledge that he was badly wounded. It must be done, he swore to himself, because it was for Annie, and all she had, and besides, he had promised to make good. But he must do something quick—before his own flame burned out.

"I ought to kill all of you," he said, and whatever effort he was making to keep steady was not betrayed in his voice. "I ought to kill you, but I'm goin' to give you a show."

He passed behind and searched them for more weapons, making sure that his work was thorough.

"Now," he ordered, "pick up your pal at your feet, because maybe he'll pull through. I guess no one can help the other one. Hit it hard for the gorge, and if either of you looks back his light goes out, because I've got your rifle, and am a dead shot."

They picked their groaning comrade up and started.

"When you see your boss," Jim called after them, "tell him he'll pay for Annie's cabin or die the next time he meets me. He will, so help me God!"

They hurried off with the limp form between them, and Jim, beyond the firelight, knelt weakly on his knees with a rifle shoving its menacing muzzle toward them. It seemed ready to carry his threat into instant execution. The moonlight gave them strange, distorted shapes as they passed away, grew smaller, more indistinct, and were finally taken into the shadows where the waterfall fell over into the blackness of the canyon. Neither had dared to look back. Jim's bluff had worked, and they disappeared, believing him unhurt and in deadly capability.

Jim settled down and ran his hand inside his shirt, where everything was sticky and warm. He looked at the big heap of coals, up at the hills which divided him from Holcomb where he knew were other men, and across the camp-fire to where a shaggy, white head, with two dark spots for eyes, looked gravely at him.

"Baldy," he said, "I'm about all in. Baldy, I guess—" He leaned upon his rifle and slowly gained his feet, after which he tried to take a step. He staggered toward the burro, determined that he would at least attempt to reach aid, then weakly pitched forward, muttering as he fell: "Jedge said there was much in possession, and I'm here yet, Annie, I'm here yet!"

The lights of the night now shone down on a world of stillness, a grass-strewn valley, bordered by great and solemn pines, and on a man who lay quiet, white and motionless, while a little burro strove to bring an answer from silent lips.

Now, Baldy didn't have a musical voice, but it was strong. There were two men riding along on the trail above who were friends of Jim's and his, and heard him calling for help. They stopped, saw the embers, and came down into the valley. They picked Jim up, drove the spurs deep into their tired horses, and struck over for Holcomb, and behind them, worried and keeping very close at their heels, came Baldy, pat-patting with his little feet and wondering in his way what it was all about. And while a doctor worked over Jim in the dance-hall, Baldy gazed solemnly through the open door, and no one disturbed him.

It was a good many months before Jim took to the trail again, and when he made his first trip he was pretty white and wan. He came to camp where the trees were thick and where he had so often stopped before, and, like many other times, a little girl huddled down between his knees and a big solemn head was at his shoulder.

"Annie," he said, "you're goin' to be rich some time, because some men have agreed to pay you for every gallon of water that runs over their dam; but there ain't goin' to be no home there any more for none of us. Some men are buildin' a lake to save water with."

The silence of the night was unbroken save for the lulling song of the brook and the lonesome yelp of a coyote, weird and mournful, in the distance.

"And we've got to find a new home where we can take good care of Baldy. He's really gittin' a little old and bent."

There came no answer. He stooped over and in the glow saw that she was fast asleep. Very gently he picked her up in his arms, her baby hand swinging listlessly down, and carried her toward the tent, saying softly:

"Sho! She's gone to sleep in her clean pinny, and—durn it all!—she forgot to say her prayers!"

"JUST FERNINST THE HILL"

Little Pointer for Those Who Feel a Desire to Seek the State of Matrimony.

The state of Matrimony is one of the United States. It is bounded by kissing and hugging on one side and cradles and babies on the other. Its chief products are population, broomsticks and staying out at night. It was discovered by Adam and Eve while trying to find a Northwest passage out of Paradise. The climate is sultry until you pass the tropics of housekeeping, when squally weather commonly sets in with such power as to keep all hands as cool as cucumbers. For the principal roads leading to this interesting state, consult the first pair of blue eyes you see.—Exchange.

Classification.

"Sir," said a little blustering man to a religious opponent: "I say, sir, do you know to what sect I belong?"

"Well, I don't exactly know," was the answer; "but to judge by your make, shape, and size, I should say you belonged to a class called the insect."

Not Responsible.

Teacher—You are late every morning.

Pupil—Well, it isn't my fault that you didn't build your blamed old school house nearer my home.

Sure.

"What is a co-worker?"

"One who helps you work somebody, of course."

We always like those who admire us; we do not always like those whom we admire.—Francis Duc de Rochefaucauld.

A woman who has a nose for news usually has a chin for telling it.

Dogs and the Eearthquake.

The recent earthquake was most distinctly felt in Cairo, numbers of residents being awakened by the swaying of the houses and the rattling of the windows and doors. The seismograph at the Telouan observatory recorded the shock at 3:50 a. m., and it lasted ten seconds. This is the worst shock actually felt in Cairo of recent years.

Strange to relate the numerous pariah dogs who infest the city and its surroundings were greatly perturbed at the unusual condition of things and scampered off toward the desert howling piteously all the way, returning thence only toward nightfall.

London's Hours of Crime.

Nearly two-thirds of the crime in London is perpetrated between 2 p. m. on Saturdays and 9 a. m. on Mondays.

Germany, Holland, France, Belgium and Austria-Hungary, in the order named, follow next after the United States in coffee consumption.

EDWIN BOOTH'S CIGAR CASE

Is Now in Possession of Hackett, Who Hopes to Give It to Players' Club.

It is James K. Hackett who affirms there was once a dishonest cab driver in the city of St. Louis.

In support of this statement, the actor details the story of a cigar case with a history, which is now in his possession. Years ago a great tragedian was playing in St. Louis. He had occasion to use a cab from the theater to his hotel. After the player had alighted the driver discovered a cigar case had been left behind.

The case was of carved black walnut, lined with dark blue silk. The actor, although an inveterate smoker, used it for a purse. When the cabman found it there were several green backs among the contents. What became of the money is not recorded, but the case was later traded over the bar for liquid refreshment. The bar tender showed it to an actor, who gave up a meerschoum pipe in exchange for it.

From that time the case passed into the possession of several persons, and after awhile came under the eye of Hackett. He admired it so much it was presented to him.

Now he declares he hopes to present the case to the Players' club, for the Players' club was founded by the distinguished tragedian who lost the case in the cab. His name was Edwin Booth.

Paying for Your Choice.

From a box or oranges marked 40 cents a dozen a woman picked out two dozen oranges and gave a dollar to the fruit man. She waited a while for her change, but the dealer had put the money into the cash drawer and seemed oblivious to the principle of change. Presently she asked for it, but the dealer said:

"Under the circumstances your two dozen oranges came to a dollar. You picked them out yourself. Any customer who avails herself of the privilege of sorting out the very best oranges there are in a box ought to be willing to pay for it. Ten cents a dozen extra is the regular charge for making your own selection."

"The idea!" the woman exclaimed. "Why, you ought to pay me for saving you the trouble."

But the dealer couldn't see it that way.

Kindled Fire With $535.

B. F. Pemberton, our popular L. & N. agent, met with a misfortune Wednesday morning. Tuesday night after it was too late to make a deposit in bank he came into possession of $535, and fearing that he might be robbed during the night placed the money in a coal bucket at the depot and put coal on it that it might be safe. The passenger train leaves here at 6 o'clock in the morning and this necessitates Mr. Pemberton's early rising and he is kept very busy until the train departs. In the rush he made a fire in the stove and dumped in the coal and money. After the rush was over he thought of his money, but it was too late.—Morganfield Post.